UNITED NATIONS **A**

General Assembly

Distr.
GENERAL

A/50/737
8 November 1995

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

Fiftieth session
Agenda item 20 (d)

STRENGTHENING OF THE COORDINATION OF HUMANITARIAN AND DISASTER RELIEF ASSISTANCE OF THE UNITED NATIONS, INCLUDING SPECIAL ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE: EMERGENCY INTERNATIONAL ASSISTANCE FOR PEACE, NORMALCY AND RECONSTRUCTION OF WAR-STRICKEN AFGHANISTAN

Report of the Secretary-General

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The present report is submitted in pursuance of General Assembly resolution 49/140, which was adopted without a vote on 20 December 1994. In that resolution, the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to authorize the United Nations Special Mission to Afghanistan, established under reso tion 48/208, to continue its efforts to facilitate national rapprochement and reconstruction in Afghanistan, in particular by promoting the earliest possible establishment of a fully representative and broad-based authoritative council with authority:

(a) To negotiate and oversee an immediate and durable cease-fire;

(b) To create and control a national security force to provide for security throughout the country and oversee the collection and safeguarding of all heavy weapons in the country;

(c) To form an acceptable transitional Government, which could, inter alia, control the national security force, until conditions for free and fair elections were established throughout the country, possibly utilizing traditional decision-making structures, such as a grand assembly, to help to establish those conditions.

2. The Assembly also called upon all Afghans, especially the leaders of the warring parties, to agree on an immediate cease-fire and a speedy transfer of power and to support the Special Mission's efforts to facilitate national reconstruction, expedite the process leading to the speedy establishment of an acceptable transitional Government and restore a fully representative and broad-based Government for Afghanistan.

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3. The Assembly further requested me to continue efforts to develop plans for national reconstruction and rehabilitation, beginning in areas of peace and security, on the basis of the recommendations contained in my previous report (A/49/688).

4. The Assembly also requested me to report to it at its fiftieth session on the progress made in the implementation of the resolution. The present report covers the period from the adoption of resolution 49/140 to mid-September 1995.

II. THE SPECIAL MISSION AND THE POLITICAL SITUATION

5. During the reporting period, Ambassador Mahmoud Mestiri continued to serve as Head of the Special Mission and, in that capacity, undertook two rounds of consultations in the region. In these efforts, he received the assistance of the Office of the Secretary-General in Afghanistan, which I established in January 1995 following the discontinuation of the function of the Personal Representative of the Secretary-General for Afghanistan and Pakistan in December 1994. I further decided that, from the beginning of 1995 and until conditions permitted its return to Kabul, the Office of the Secretary-General would be located in Jalalabad.

A. Developments during the period from December 1994 to April 1995

6. On 26 December 1994, the Head of the Special Mission began another round of the mediation efforts in Afghanistan, in pursuance of General Assembly resolution 49/140. The purpose of this phase was to seek the transfer of power from President Burhanuddin Rabbani, whose term of office was expiring on 28 December 1994, to an acceptable and broadly representative "mechanism". Mr. Rabbani often reiterated to the Head of the Special Mission his willingness to transfer power if the United Nations established an appropriate mechanism for the purpose. That mechanism would serve as the first step towards initiating a broad-based political dialogue that would include not only the warring parties but also the neutral parties and independent Afghan personalities.

7. The Head of the Special Mission met several times with President Rabbani in Kabul, with the head of the National Islamic Movement of Afghanistan (NIMA), General Rashid Dostum, and with the members of the Supreme Coordination Council, which included the leader of the Hezb-e-Islami, Gulbuddin Hekmatyar. He also met with the Governor Hajji Abdul Qadir of Nangarhar province, with Governor Ismael Khan of Herat province, and with the leaders of the Taliban, an emerging military faction, which by then was in effective control of several provinces. After many difficult discussions and negotiations, an agreement was reached on the composition of an interim mechanism, and Mr. Rabbani agreed to transfer power on 20 February 1995. However, the rapid advance of the Taliban forces towards Kabul and their arrival at the outskirts of the city on 11 February created confusion and disarray among the traditional parties and disrupted the plan for the transfer of power.

8. In these circumstances, Mr. Rabbani insisted that the Taliban should be included in the mechanism. The Taliban, on the other hand, while expressing support for the United Nations peace efforts and agreeing to negotiate with the mechanism, refused to participate in it with political parties that they held responsible for the destruction of the country. The Special Mission, with the assistance of a group of four prominent Afghans, 1/ tried to persuade the Taliban to join the mechanism and thus break the deadlock, but to no avail. The transfer of power did not, therefore, take place as planned, and Mr. Rabbani remained in power in Kabul.

9. On 22 February, a working group comprising the aforementioned four independent Afghans was established to negotiate with Mr. Rabbani and the Taliban an acceptable modality for the latter's participation in the transfer-of-power mechanism. Mr. Rabbani, in the meantime, agreed to a formula by which the mechanism would comprise two representatives from each of the provinces in Afghanistan and between 10 and 20 independent Afghan personalities. The idea of provincial representation in the mechanism was also acceptable to the Taliban. On this basis, it was agreed that power would be transferred on 21 March 1995, the first day of the Afghan New Year.

10. While these discussions were going on, preparations were being made for a military confrontation in Kabul. On 6 March, heavy fighting broke out in the south-western part of the city, initially between the government forces and those of the Hezb-e-Wahdat, led by Abdul Mazari. The Taliban then joined in on the side of the Hezb-e-Wahdat. The fighting was unusually fierce and exacted heavy casualties, especially among the civilian population. At the end, the government forces gained control of the whole of Kabul.

11. Despite these hostilities, the Special Mission continued negotiations on the mechanism. However, new conditions were demanded and this blocked agreement. With the renewed fighting and in the absence of any immediate prospects for progress on the political front, I requested the Head of the Special Mission to leave Afghanistan for a short time in order to reassess the direction and modalities of the United Nations effort. He left the region on 13 April 1995.

B. Developments from mid-April to mid-September 1995

12. During the period from mid-April to the end of August 1995, a relative calm prevailed in Kabul and in most parts of Afghanistan. The country was effectively controlled by three major military powers: Mr. Rabbani and his Commander, Ahmad Shah Massoud, together with their ally, Governor Ismael Khan; General Dostum, mainly in the northern part of the country; and the Taliban in the south and south-eastern provinces. Meanwhile, a series of intra-Afghan negotiations took place among the leaders of these groups, at times with the involvement of outside countries. But no significant results emerged from these talks.

13. In the weeks following the Special Mission's departure from Afghanistan, I received numerous requests from Afghans and others that it should resume its peacemaking efforts as soon as possible. In June, the Head of the Special

Mission came to New York for consultations on his possible return to the region. I reviewed with him the various modalities of further peace efforts, such as the need to bring in all Afghan factions; the need to work with the various outside parties, possibly including, at the appropriate stage, the convening of an international conference; and the desirability of having the Head of the Special Mission remain for a prolonged period inside Afghanistan, combined with a strengthening of the political staff of the Office of the Secretary-General in Afghanistan in order to ensure an effective presence in different parts of the country. On 20 June, the Head of the Special Mission briefed the Security Council on the situation in Afghanistan and the prospects for peace. He received the support and encouragement of the Council to press on with his efforts.

14. I accordingly requested the Head of the Special Mission to return to Afghanistan in July to undertake an updated assessment of the situation there with a view to developing options for a resumed peace process.

15. In the initial stage of his consultations in the region, the Head of the Special Mission met with senior officials of the Government of Saudi Arabia in Jeddah. He also met with the Secretary-General of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), Mr. Hamid Al-Gabid, and exchanged views on possibilities for enhanced coordination between the United Nations and OIC missions in the future.

16. On 19 July, the Head of the Special Mission arrived in Afghanistan and started a round of meetings with Governor Hajji Abdul Qadir and the members of the Supreme Coordination Council in Jalalabad; with President Rabbani in Kabul; with the Taliban Shura in Kandahar; with Governor Ismael Khan in Herat; and with General Dostum in Mazar-i-Sharif. In Pakistan, the Head of the Special Mission met Mr. Hekmatyar at Parachinar; the leader of the National Islamic Front of Afghanistan (NIFA), Pir Sayed Ahmed Gailani; and Sardar Abdul Wali, the envoy of former King Zahir Shah. He also met the Foreign Minister of Pakistan, Mr. Aseff Ahmad Ali, and was received by the Prime Minister of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto. While in Islamabad, he held several further discussions with senior officials of OIC, including its Secretary-General.

17. The Head of the Special Mission concluded his assessment mission on 1 August and reported to me. He was encouraged by the results of the positive and useful discussions he had had with various Afghan leaders and by the persistent and overwhelming desire among the Afghan people for a United Nations-mediated peace in their country. I endorsed his main conclusion, which was to press ahead with the efforts of the Special Mission regarding the transfer-of-power mechanism and to seek a negotiated agreement on its establishment, in accordance with the General Assembly mandate. The Head of the Special Mission was accordingly requested to resume his mission as soon as possible.

18. Meanwhile, on 23 August, heavy fighting commenced in western Afghanistan between the Government-backed forces of Ismael Khan and the Taliban. This led to the takeover of the important province of Herat by the Taliban on 5 September. Skirmishes at varying levels of intensity have since continued in

parts of Afghanistan and there has been evidence of preparations for a major assault on Kabul by the forces opposed to Mr. Rabbani.

19. The Head of the Special Mission returned to the region on 16 September to begin the current phase of the Special Mission's work. A report on this phase will be issued as an addendum to the present report.

III. REHABILITATION AND DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

A. United Nations system rehabilitation activities

20. During the past year, the United Nations development system continued to assist in rehabilitation and reconstruction activities in the majority of Afghanistan that is peaceful. The United Nations system has an operational presence in the capital and each of the four major regions and has been able to undertake rehabilitation activities in 80 per cent of the country's 329 districts.

21. Even before the conflict started, Afghanistan was among the poorest of the least developed countries, and the conflict has resulted in a further deterioration in the quality of life for most Afghan people. The incidence of disease and malnutrition in some of the more remote areas of the country is reaching alarming proportions. The need to address these poverty-related issues simultaneously with the rehabilitation of war-affected areas has generated a flexible response from the United Nations system in providing a range of assistance programmes tailored to the needs of the beneficiary communities. It has also strengthened the close linkages and coordination between the United Nations system's activities for humanitarian assistance and rehabilitation in Afghanistan.

22. In carrying out its rehabilitation programmes, the United Nations system depends greatly on the local knowledge and experience of Afghan and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) as implementing partners as well as on functioning government departments in the regions as well as in the capital. Where possible, cost recovery is employed in order to enhance the sustainability of rehabilitation efforts. The United Nations system also relies to an increasing extent on the participation of local communities in identifying and monitoring rehabilitation activities to be carried out, as well as in implementation. Its experience in Afghanistan shows that community participation, besides being sound development administration practice, reinforces the local communities' stake in peace and stability and thus contributes to the national peace process.

23. The United Nations system's operational activities for rehabilitation during the past year have focused on assisting local communities in rural infrastructure, food production, health improvement, animal health services, rehabilitation of disabled people and human settlements. The main underlying purpose of these activities is poverty alleviation and human development. While most of them are located in rural areas, particularly areas with the greatest potential to stimulate the return of refugees, substantial assistance is also

being directed to rehabilitation in urban areas. The main activities of the United Nations system, and the results achieved, are described below.

1. Rural economic production

24. The main United Nations system organizations involved in implementing projects for the rehabilitation of rural economic production are the United Nations Office for Project Services, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the World Food Programme (WFP) and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). The activities of the United Nations Office for Project Services and FAO are carried out in the framework of three projects financed by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) approved in mid-1994. UNDP's strategy is to deliver a substantial programme focused on restoring key components of the food production base and fostering community participation, drawing on the inherent strengths and resilience of the Afghan people.

25. UNDP's programme strategy uses district rehabilitation shuras, local representative bodies functioning within traditional administrative boundaries, as the means for local communities to determine their own priorities for rehabilitation. Other agencies base their assistance on other forms of community organization, including those identified according to a functional definition. Common to all United Nations system programmes is the aim of promoting local self-sufficiency and sustainability, including through the participation of the private sector. The United Nations system concentrates on rehabilitating key items of infrastructure that are beyond the independent capacity of the communities, such as irrigation systems and secondary feeder roads, being rebuilt with WFP assistance to link production areas to markets. These activities also seek to address several other key aims of the United Nations system, such as the integration of returnees into their communities through support from UNHCR and the eventual elimination of illicit crop production, which is a priority of the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP).

26. Some of the results achieved by the United Nations system in the field of rural economic production are:

(a) FAO, in collaboration with other United Nations agencies, rehabilitated traditional village irrigation systems, provided technical backstopping and supervision to agricultural programmes and conducted emergency training to re-establish the technical know-how needed to support the rehabilitation strategy;

(b) By the end of 1994, 48 per cent of farmers nationally were planting improved varieties of staple crops, mainly wheat. The figures rose to 100 per cent, 92 per cent and 88 per cent in Paktika, Kandahar and Paktia provinces respectively, where FAO's programme was focused. Over 60 per cent of all farmers received their improved wheat seed from NGOs;

(c) During 1994 and the first half of 1995, Afghans who received WFP food for work built 17 kilometres of retaining walls for flood protection, repaired

nearly 1,300 kilometres of roads, including small bridges and culverts, planted over 8,000 hectares of orchards and supported communities to repair over 3,000 kilometres of irrigation canals, involving, inter alia, the construction of water reservoirs with a capacity of 2,854,000 litres, providing drinking water and irrigation water for over 500,000 hectares of agricultural land in the country. These activities benefited over 3 million people;

(d) The United Nations Office for Project Services, funded by UNDP, has in recent years rehabilitated over 2,600 kilometres of irrigation systems, restoring water to 470,000 hectares and increasing wheat production by 376,000 tons, sufficient to feed over 1.4 million people for a year. FAO has similarly repaired 280 kilometres of canals, restoring water to 24,000 hectares and increasing wheat production by 18,500 tons;

(e) The United Nations Office for Project Services, with UNDP funding, has also improved and repaired over 275 water supply systems in rural villages, bringing safer water to 210,000 local residents;

(f) In the last half of 1994, veterinarians and basic veterinary workers, trained by the United Nations Office for Project Services and FAO with UNDP funding, vaccinated and treated 12 million animals in 26 provinces.

27. Since mid-1990, UNHCR has assisted 2.25 million Afghan refugees to return to their villages. This direct assistance consists of cash grants to cover transport costs, wheat and plastic sheeting. In addition, UNHCR has been implementing quick impact projects in order to revive the communities affected by high rates of return. These projects cover most of the basic needs of the community, including rehabilitation of major repatriation routes, shelter, repair and reconstruction of shallow wells, educational and health services, irrigation canals, income generation and related training activities. During the first seven months of 1995, UNHCR field offices implemented directly or through NGOs and local government bodies over 150 quick impact projects in all the major regions of Afghanistan.

28. Parallel with these activities, UNHCR collaborated with other United Nations agencies in funding several rural and urban schemes, which reinforce the link between the short-term quick impact projects and the medium-term activities of these agencies. Similarly, memoranda of understanding are being concluded between UNHCR and UNDP, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and FAO to institutionalize the link between the respective activities of the agencies and eventually prepare the ground for phasing out the reintegration projects in favour of longer-term development schemes.

2. Urban rehabilitation and infrastructure

29. At the end of 1994, it was estimated that half a million houses in the urban areas of Afghanistan needed to be rebuilt. The main aim of the UNDP-financed United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (UNCHS) urban rehabilitation project is to support the indigenous process of repair, focusing on water supply, sanitation, interim housing repairs and building materials. The project also aims to develop expertise in the Government to develop longer-

term settlement support programmes. The programme has two components. The neighbourhood action programme aims to support small-scale local initiatives in physical and social living conditions with the participation of representatives of urban communities. The municipal infrastructure programme supports Afghan technical institutions in assessing, managing and implementing high-priority infrastructure repairs.

30. Besides UNDP and UNCHS, UNICEF and WHO have been assisting the rehabilitation and repair of water supply systems to ensure the availability of safe drinking water in urban areas. In common with the United Nations system's programme in the rural sector, the key element in both components of the urban programme is consultation with local communities to determine priorities and monitor programme implementation. Whilst programmes have been operational in Herat and Mazar-i-Sharif for several years, it was possible to begin work in Kabul during the first half of 1995 with the improvement of the security situation there. Many of the labour-intensive urban rehabilitation interventions were carried out with the assistance of WFP food-for-work programmes.

31. Some of the main results of recent United Nations system assistance in this area are:

(a) In the past year, 10,000 families have rebuilt their houses with support from UNCHS, funded by UNDP;

(b) In 1995, UNCHS is supplying 280 shallow well pumps to bring safer water to 13,800 urban families in three cities;

(c) Earlier this year, a project funded by several United Nations agencies and executed by WHO, in association with Kandahar Municipality and Water Development Authority, rehabilitated Kandahar's water supply system, bringing safer piped water to 300,000 people in the city. A high elevated water reservoir was also rehabilitated, with a 300-cubic metre capacity to keep the system under pressure. Employment opportunities were created for 150 people in the repair of 97 kilometres of pipe and the installation of 32 valves and manholes;

(d) UNICEF has repaired or installed 2,000 hand pumps in the last three years and repaired or built 20 deep wells, bringing safe drinking water to an estimated 900,000 people. UNICEF has also assisted in building 10,600 sanitary latrines, benefiting 48,000 people;

(e) Through labour intensive food-for-work projects, WFP supported urban sanitation projects in partnership with United Nations agencies and NGOs to improve sanitary conditions in urban areas in the country by removing over 100,000 cubic metres of garbage and solid waste from urban centres;

(f) WFP shelter reconstruction assistance between 1994 and mid-1995, in partnership with UNHCR, supported the reconstruction of 16,019 war-damaged houses on a self-help basis, benefiting 112,133 returnees and facilitating reintegration and resettlement.

3. Social sector

32. There is a strong linkage between the rehabilitation of rural economic production, urban rehabilitation and the revitalization of the education and health sectors. Communities will be economically and socially viable only if they have the basic social services and facilities. The United Nations system is undertaking programmes in health and education and the rehabilitation of the disabled, with particular emphasis on assisting the return of refugees. The success of the United Nations system's activities in the social sector depends on decentralized decision-making and implementation. UNICEF has set up five sub-offices and three field offices; the World Health Organization (WHO) operates six sub-offices and three field offices. The United Nations system's objectives in the social sectors are to develop and rehabilitate integrated primary health-care structures; combat major communicable diseases in order to reduce morbidity and mortality, especially among women and children; sensitize communities and raise awareness about disability issues, leading to the reintegration of the disabled into society; and improve basic education techniques and facilities through the provision of educational materials and introducing innovative techniques such as distance learning.

33. The United Nations system's activities in the social sector are progressively moving from emergency assistance towards action-oriented longer-term rehabilitation, based on the needs of the people concerned. The UNDP-financed comprehensive disabled Afghans programme, executed by the United Nations Office for Project Services, has trained 6,500 disabled Afghans and led to their reintegration into community life. In the health sector, needs and priorities are determined through regional health coordination committees, consisting of the Chief Medical Officer of each province, heads of departments, representatives of the local shuras and concerned United Nations agencies and NGOs. The aim is to coordinate all United Nations system and NGO inputs to ensure the smooth operation of an integrated primary health programme at the district level.

34. These activities also require close coordination of the activities of the United Nations system and other agencies. In collaboration with the United Nations Office for Project Services, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) is introducing literacy and basic education materials to communities and women's training programmes. UNESCO, UNICEF, WHO and other agencies participate in distance learning through BBC radio, focusing on and building a community-centred self-reliant approach to rehabilitation. Many programmes use the skill, local knowledge and experience, mobility and capacity of NGOs as implementing partners.

35. Significant achievements by the United Nations system in the social sector are as follows:

(a) Training of health workers has formed a major part of WHO and UNICEF activities. WHO has provided technical expertise to regional health authorities in the management of a range of communicable diseases and has helped to restart the work of medical training institutions, while UNICEF focused its training activities on the treatment of diarrhoea and acute respiratory infections. Since 1993, WHO has trained 12,844 health workers (including doctors, midwives,

technicians, health volunteers and local communities) in various aspects of disease control and prevention and supported the establishment of health posts in 4,500 villages;

(b) UNESCO, working with NGOs, has developed and tested model methodologies for non-formal literacy and management of primary schools in crisis; so far 20 trainers and 60 teachers from 30 schools have been trained;

(c) By the end of 1994, the United Nations Office for Project Services, with UNDP funding, had treated and trained almost 13,000 disabled people, ensuring their ability to remain in their communities as productive members, thereby benefiting their families, estimated to number more than 50,000 people;

(d) WFP, in 1994 to mid-1995, supported the rehabilitation of 101 schools with 42,420 pupils in two shifts, and supported vocational training and income-generating projects reaching over 3,000 youth, women and orphans in various trades.

B. Coordination of rehabilitation activities

36. Recognizing that the prevailing complex emergency in Afghanistan has already lasted more than 15 years and that many aspects of national government are still dysfunctional, the United Nations family has devoted considerable attention to ensuring that, wherever possible, the longer-term objective of sustainability is built into all programmes. In mid-1994, the Rehabilitation Steering Committee was created with four regional subcommittees based in Herat, Mazar-i-Sharif, Kandahar and Jalalabad, chaired by the United Nations Resident Coordinator and attended by all United Nations agencies operational in the country.

37. The Committee and its regional subcommittees, now including a fifth region of five provinces surrounding the capital, have met every quarter in the last year to review all work plans for the upcoming six-month period. In the first round of meetings, programmes with a total value of US$ 26.6 million were adopted; in the second round, US$ 53 million; and in the last round in June 1995, US$ 63.5 million. Whilst these figures do not include pure relief assistance such as food aid for the internally displaced, or direct assistance to returning refugees, they do include programmes such as demining, which are part of the United Nations emergency humanitarian programme but which are also a prerequisite for rehabilitation activities. Detailed reports have been produced for the use of all operational partners, including local authorities. Staff of United Nations agencies have been trained in accessing the computer database.

C. Mobilizing additional resources for rehabilitation activities

38. While the rehabilitation activities of the United Nations system in Afghanistan have achieved significant results, it is widely recognized that they meet only a small proportion of the needs for assistance. United Nations system staff responsible for managing and implementing these projects have felt for some time that they could meet a greater proportion of the needs for

rehabilitation in Afghanistan if more funding became available. This was the subject of discussion in 1994 between UNDP and the Swedish International Development Authority (SIDA), resulting in the latter's offer to host a meeting, organized by UNDP, to brief the donor community on the work of the United Nations system in rehabilitation in Afghanistan and the potential of these activities to serve as vehicles for intensified donor assistance.

39. This briefing of donors was held in Stockholm on 1 and 2 June 1995. It was attended by representatives of 24 NGOs and 20 organizations of the United Nations system. There were 131 participants, many of whom were eminent specialists and scholars. The main highlights of the discussions at the meeting were as follows:

(a) Afghanistan is 171st on the Human Development Index out of the 174 countries listed in the UNDP Human Development Report 1995. It is the only non-African country in the lowest 12 on the list. In terms of life expectancy, adult literacy, mean years of schooling, education attainment and real per capita gross national product, Afghanistan ranks among the lowest in the world. It has the highest infant and maternal mortality rates in the world;

(b) Most of the country is relatively peaceful. Donor projects of humanitarian and rehabilitation assistance are being carried out in all parts of the country and the country is capable of absorbing much more longer-term rehabilitation assistance in carefully selected areas;

(c) Afghanistan offers a prime example of the synergy that can exist between the United Nations and the NGO community, as a result of which each benefits from the comparative advantage of the other as donor as well as implementing agent;

(d) The meeting was thoroughly briefed by three panels, representing a wide cross-section of United Nations and NGO experience, on their efforts to promote a strategy for recovery in rural economic production, urban rehabilitation and the social sector. It noted that rural economic production was increasing from a very low base and that self-sufficiency in food production is achievable provided additional inputs to existing programmes are made available. It further noted that many people are migrating to urban areas, some of which are among the fastest growing in Asia. Programmes to address urgent needs, which include mines and rehabilitation of basic infrastructure, are being promoted on a neighbourhood basis with full community participation. However, proper planning is needed if future problems are to be avoided. In the social sector the urgent needs of women and children, the disabled, the destitute and the illiterate were noted as very high priorities;

(e) The transition from humanitarian assistance to rehabilitation and development is not a linear process. Humanitarian assistance and rehabilitation must be pursued in parallel, always keeping in mind the longer-term perspective for the development of the country;

(f) Sustainability of rehabilitation activities should be reinforced by using cost-effective methods, employing some cost recovery where possible, and incorporating adequate provision for human resource development;

(g) The cost-effectiveness and impact of rehabilitation projects are increased when they are jointly conceived and implemented by the United Nations system, bilateral donors, NGOs and local communities. Several examples were cited in this respect, including the Expanded Programme of Immunization (EPI) and the seed and crop production and veterinary services programmes;

(h) Community participation and involvement in all aspects of the programme and project cycle are a prerequisite for successful rehabilitation;

(i) The significant need for infrastructure rehabilitation in urban areas was noted, as was the need for careful planning, to maximize the efficient use of resources and minimize damage to the environment;

(j) Peace in Afghanistan continues to be promoted and reinforced by the many rehabilitation activities that are under way in almost every part of the country. Further expansion and intensification of efforts to promote community-based rehabilitation activities need not and should not await a national political settlement; delay simply adds to the cost of rehabilitation;

(k) UNDP should now move forward from the base already established in the action plan for immediate rehabilitation and in the mechanisms being developed for coordination through the Rehabilitation Steering Committee to provide more systematic coordination of external assistance to Afghanistan.

D. Narcotics

40. For the second year, UNDCP was able to complete a detailed survey of poppy cultivation in eight opium-producing provinces of Afghanistan, the results of which are still being processed. Whilst Afghanistan continues to be one of the world's largest producers of illicit opium, preliminary indications from the latest survey confirm that a substantial reduction of opium production has taken place in Nangarhar province as a result of the intensive programme initiated by the Governor and Shura of Nangarhar towards the end of 1994. Mobilization of international assistance will be of critical importance in ensuring that those communities that have stopped production are given incentives not to return to poppy production next season.

41. The availability of UNDCP baseline data on opium production at the village level has enabled all donors to ensure that assistance does not benefit opium production and that opium producers do not receive assistance unless specific agreements are reached with local communities on firm commitments and achievements in the reduction of opium poppy cultivation. In mid-1995, UNDCP fielded a high-level mission to assess the impact of past programmes and recommend future policy. The results will be shared with donors towards the end of 1995.

E. The relationship between rehabilitation and emergency humanitarian assistance programmes

42. As in previous years, a large portion of United Nations assistance to Afghanistan during the past year has been devoted to humanitarian assistance. In parallel with its ongoing rehabilitation work, the United Nations development system has been able to support the work of the United Nations emergency humanitarian programme in meeting immediate life-sustaining needs. As reported last year, it has done this by providing a corps of specialized staff, with a well-established logistical support capacity to assist in the delivery of emergency relief, and at the same time to ensure that the design of the operation helps to generate maximum local participation and commitment, setting the stage for more sustainable rehabilitation and reconstruction in the future.

43. A number of rehabilitation programmes are closely linked with humanitarian activities, while being funded by UNDP. In the past year, this has been especially important in the urban sector as the improved security situation in the capital has allowed the return of the displaced to begin hand in hand with emergency shelter programmes, preparation and planning for longer-term urban rehabilitation. The UNCHS/Habitat programme has been instrumental in providing coordination on the ground among United Nations agencies and NGOs and in developing programmes for donor funding, addressing both humanitarian and rehabilitation issues. Similarly FAO-executed projects have continued to provide technical backstopping for emergency agricultural inputs and the United Nations Office for Project Services-executed rural rehabilitation programme has provided technical support for UNHCR programmes encouraging repatriation. United Nations Volunteers (UNVs) have continued to be provided as food aid monitors, voluntary repatriation monitors, logistics specialists and managers of emergency programmes.

IV. EMERGENCY HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

44. At its forty-ninth session, the General Assembly called upon the international community to respond to the consolidated appeal for emergency humanitarian assistance for Afghanistan, launched by the Secretary-General for the period from 1 October 1994 to 30 September 1995, having in mind the availability of the Afghanistan Emergency Trust Fund.

45. The consolidated appeal called for US$ 106.4 million for assistance to internally displaced persons, mine clearance, voluntary repatriation, food aid, water supply and sanitation, social sector programmes and coordination and relief management support. As of 1 October 1995, a total of US$ 79.3 million had been pledged/contributed to United Nations agencies and NGOs for the programmes contained in the appeal.

46. A new consolidated inter-agency appeal was launched on 9 October 1995 calling for US$ 124 million to cover the period from 1 October 1995 to September 1996.

A. Implementation of humanitarian programmes

1. Internally displaced persons

Kabul

47. Fighting in Kabul continued intermittently until 20 March 1995, when the forces of President Rabbani gained control over the entire city. Since April 1995, large numbers of internally displaced persons from Jalalabad and refugees from Pakistan have returned to the capital. As of 1 August, a total of 150,000 persons had been recorded returning to the city, which remains without electricity and potable water. In addition, large parts of the city are inaccessible because of mines, and several neighbourhoods in the south and south-west have been completely destroyed.

48. The economic blockade, which had denied the citizens of Kabul access to emergency relief aid during much of 1994, was lifted in December 1994, to allow a United Nations convoy carrying 1,500 tons of food and other humanitarian aid to reach the city. With the complete lifting of the blockade in March 1995, the humanitarian activities of the United Nations agencies and NGOs were substantially expanded. Under the coordination of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance to Afghanistan (UNOCHA), United Nations agencies were able to divert substantial resources to the priority task of immediate relief for the citizens of Kabul.

49. In the first half of 1995, WFP delivered a total of 5,000 tons of food for emergency programmes and food-for-work activities. During the same period UNICEF established 46 mini-health centres to provide treatment of respiratory infections, nutrition screening and food supplementation to 45,000 children; supported the repair of wells and delivered essential supplies and the fuel to public hospitals; WHO delivered medical supplies to the Ministry of Health; UNCHS managed a programme for waste disposal and rehabilitation of the city water supply and UNHCR provided emergency shelter to returning refugees and displaced persons. In order to combat the menace of mines covering an area of over 20 square kilometres within the city, one third of the capacity of UNOCHA's mine-clearance programme was transferred into the city as from April 1995.

Jalalabad

50. As a result of the continuous fighting in Kabul throughout most of 1994, about half a million persons had fled from their homes by the end of the year. Many of these persons continued to seek shelter at the Sar Shahi camp outside Jalalabad, which had been established in January 1994 by UNHCR. Responsibility for the management of the camp was taken over by UNOCHA in September 1994, but the rate of new arrivals was such that a new camp (New Hadda) had to be opened in October 1994. By the end of the year, internally displaced persons living in camps near Jalalabad totalled almost 300,000.

51. The United Nations agencies and NGOs have continued to provide all necessary emergency assistance, such as wheat flour and other food items, tents and household equipment, potable water, sanitation and medical services. As the situation in Kabul improved in April 1995, some families began to leave the

camps in Jalalabad and return to Kabul. In July, August and the first three weeks of September, WFP provided an incentive food package to those willing to deregister from the camps and return to Kabul.

2. Mine clearance

52. The UNOCHA mine clearance programme is in its sixth year of operation. The programme, implemented by six Afghan NGOs, one United Kingdom NGO and one Iranian agency, employs over 3,100 Afghan staff. UNOCHA requested US$ 18 million for the mine clearance programme in the consolidated appeal, of which US$ 17.4 million had been made available as at 30 September 1995. The programme consists of four major components: mine awareness, mine-clearance training, minefield survey and physical clearance of mines. Operations have been carried out in 22 of the 30 provinces of Afghanistan, as well as in Pakistan and the Islamic Republic of Iran (mine awareness for returning Afghan refugees).

53. The programme has to date identified 490 square kilometres of mined areas in Afghanistan. Of the 128 square kilometres categorized as high priority areas, the programme has so far cleared more than half (68 square kilometres). The end of 1997 has been set as a deadline for clearing all priority mined areas in the country, provided that sufficient funding is available.

3. Voluntary repatriation

54. During the first seven months of 1995, UNHCR assisted 71,483 Afghan refugees to repatriate from the Islamic Republic of Iran. The total observed border crossings from Pakistan stood at 79,901 persons, of whom 32,225 were assisted by UNHCR. In Herat, UNHCR, in cooperation with the International Organization for Migration (IOM), provided subsidized transport to 18,260 persons going to distant locations in Afghanistan. The balance of the Afghan refugee population in the Islamic Republic of Iran and Pakistan now stands at 1.5 million and 1.1 million respectively. UNHCR's quick impact projects favour urban and rural communities affected by the return of refugees and internally displaced persons, and include repair of major repatriation routes.

55. After six years of providing support to and facilitating the repatriation of Afghan refugees from the neighbouring countries, and recognizing a fundamental change of circumstances in Afghanistan since the transfer of power in Kabul in April 1992, UNHCR, in consultation with the Governments of the countries of asylum and the Afghan authorities, has established a three-year time-frame for completion of the process of repatriation. During this period, reintegration assistance to areas of high refugee return in Afghanistan will be increased in order to encourage repatriation and sustain reintegration. In the third year, UNHCR's returnee programme in Afghanistan would be phased down in favour of the development-oriented United Nations agencies and the status of the residual groups of Afghans remaining in countries of asylum would be determined.

56. As part of this strategy, an ad hoc intergovernmental consultative group, comprising the representatives of the Governments of Afghanistan, the Islamic

Republic of Iran and Pakistan as well as UNHCR, has been established to advocate increased rehabilitation assistance to all parts of Afghanistan, especially safe areas, and continued assistance to refugees in neighbouring host countries until the process of repatriation is completed. The work of this group is complemented by the activities of the two tripartite repatriation commissions, which coordinate policy issues and operational matters related to the voluntary repatriation of Afghan refugees.

57. Through its network of field offices in Afghanistan, UNHCR is monitoring the return of refugees and internally displaced persons to their places of origin. On an exceptional basis, one group of internally displaced persons in Mazar-i-Sharif was provided with cash grants to facilitate their return to Ghor province. UNHCR has requested the authorities in Kabul to promulgate a general amnesty under which the basic rights of the returning refugees from abroad and internally displaced persons would be guaranteed. These rights include freedom of movement, re-acquisition of property, transfer of assets, fair treatment of foreign spouses in mixed marriages and freedom from harassment or legal process arising from non-criminal activities while in exile.

4. Food assistance

58. Food aid is provided by WFP in Afghanistan in the form of emergency assistance to internally displaced persons and vulnerable groups and support for people-oriented and community-based rehabilitation activities to facilitate reintegration and resettlement of Afghan refugees from Pakistan and the Islamic Republic of Iran. Emergency food assistance is also provided to victims of landslides, earthquakes and floods in disaster and drought-prone areas of the country. Vulnerable groups such as widows, orphans and the urban poor are also provided with food aid.

59. Food-for-work projects through labour-intensive activities are supporting local communities to undertake productive public utility works that simultaneously provide employment opportunities for the hungry and poor and support poverty alleviation activities through local self-help initiatives. Through these activities, local communities are engaged in rehabilitation works on roads, small bridges and culverts, irrigation canals, water supply systems, agricultural lands and public buildings.

60. A total of 100,871 tons of food aid was distributed during 1994. From January to June 1995, WFP distributed 53,200 tons of food aid in Afghanistan for emergency relief assistance and rehabilitation activities, reaching an estimated 900,000 beneficiaries in all parts of the country. Of the total food aid distributed, 35 per cent is in support of rehabilitation activities, 35 per cent for care and maintenance of internally displaced persons and refugees and 29 per cent for food-for-work-based rehabilitation programming. WFP expects to utilize close to 100,000 tons of food aid during the second half of 1995, of which 70 per cent would be devoted to food-for-work-based rehabilitation programmes.

5. Health, water supply and sanitation

61. WHO and UNICEF, in collaboration with the Ministry of Public Health, NGOs and local communities, have taken a range of initiatives to help to restore basic health services on an emergency basis. Most notably the agencies joined together in November 1994 and April to June 1995 to carry out three rounds of a mass immunization campaign. Nearly 2.4 million children under 5 were immunized against polio, and over 800,000 under 2 against measles; over 700,000 women of child-bearing age were immunized against tetanus. The campaign was carried out with the assistance of 13,000 people, including vaccinators, volunteers, teachers and community leaders. Following an appeal from the United Nations, all warring factions observed a cease-fire for the first week of the campaign in November 1994. In practice, the cease-fire stayed in place for almost two months.

62. WHO and UNICEF have also provided substantial quantities of medical supplies and equipment to health facilities in all parts of the country. UNICEF, in collaboration with WFP, has supported feeding programmes for malnourished children, particularly in Kabul and in the camps for internally displaced persons.

6. Agriculture

63. The rehabilitation of agriculture continued to facilitate the resettlement of returning refugees and displaced persons. Emphasis was given to restoration of the basic productive capacity in agriculture. FAO provided high quality seed of improved varieties and fertilizer, fruit trees and root stock, assisted in introducing judicious use of pesticide through training and extension activities, trained basic veterinary workers and organized vaccination campaigns against infectious diseases of animals.

7. Emergency support for social programmes

64. UNICEF distributed education kits in most regions, including Kabul, where schools reopened after the fighting. UNICEF and UNESCO supplied teaching materials, including kits for their production, to more than 15,000 classrooms, benefiting over 150,000 students. A number of training activities and pilot projects aimed at improving access to education, particularly for girls, as well as projects targeting the most vulnerable women and children. Activities included income-generation, skills training, drop-in centres and emergency shelters for destitute children and support for women's organizations.

B. Coordination and security

65. Throughout the period under review, UNOCHA has continued to provide coordination and logistical support for humanitarian programmes under the direction of the United Nations Coordinator for the Emergency Humanitarian Programme for Afghanistan. In addition, UNOCHA has continued to exercise responsibility for essential common service projects, including the provision of

aircraft services and a radio network, to support the activities of United Nations agencies and NGOs participating in the humanitarian programme.

66. In December 1994 United Nations international staff returned to Kabul on a continuous rotating basis and have been present ever since, except for a few days in March 1995 during a period of intensive fighting. However, it has still not been possible to resume the full international presence and to lift the evacuation status declared in August 1992. In other parts of the country, security concerns have rarely impeded the work of the United Nations agencies and international staff were present on a more or less continuous basis in Herat, Jalalabad, Kandahar and Mazar-i-Sharif. Regular missions were undertaken to other areas, as required. Recent events in Herat did not disrupt the humanitarian activities in the region.

V. OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

67. The United Nations efforts to achieve peace and national reconciliation in Afghanistan have reached another critical juncture. The dramatic events during last February and March, and again in September, have led to another reconfiguration of the political forces in the country. This creates the possibility of further conflict but may also present new opportunities for peace.

68. Continued instability in Afghanistan would have grave consequences not only for the Afghans themselves but also for the whole region. Afghanistan is the place where most of the ethnic fault lines in Central Asia converge. The war there has for years had negative repercussions on neighbouring States.

69. Afghanistan as a whole experienced a period of relative peace between April and August 1995, permitting a significant number of refugees and internally displaced persons to return to their homes. The Afghan people gave every indication of wishing to see this peace become a permanent condition. Their yearning for lasting peace and stability, which have been denied them for too long, deserves the active support of the international community.

70. The Afghan people and their leaders remain strongly opposed to foreign interference in the internal affairs of their country and would like all interested parties to work with the United Nations to try to ensure that such interference ceases. Many Afghans believe that, if it did, they could resolve their differences and achieve a lasting settlement and durable peace. I urge the international community to reassert its insistence that all States abstain from interfering in the internal affairs of Afghanistan.

71. In the various peace plans that have been put forward, there is a significant common point. They all propose the establishment of a representative preparatory body to initiate a political process leading towards a lasting settlement. Differences remain on the modalities, but there seems to be a general consensus that such a preparatory mechanism is necessary if Afghanistan is to take the first crucial step out of the current impasse. I still believe that the United Nations should continue to help the Afghan people to take this step. This is an approach on which there is a general agreement,

in varying degrees, among the Afghan leaders whom the Head of the Special Mission has consulted during his recent rounds of consultations. I accordingly decided that he should return to the region in September and redouble his efforts to assist the Afghans in arriving at such an arrangement. I further decided to strengthen the Special Mission by stationing four additional Political Affairs Officers in four major cities in Afghanistan, who will be able to ensure continuity of information exchange and consultation between the Special Mission and the political leaders based in those cities.

72. The issue of former President Najibullah remains a matter of great concern to me. Over three years have elapsed since he was given refuge in the compound of the Office of the Secretary-General for Afghanistan and Pakistan. I find it deeply regrettable that, despite my repeated pleas to the authorities in Kabul, Mr. Najibullah and his companions have still not been able to leave Afghanistan for another country of their choice. His safe departure would enable the United Nations to discharge its obligation to a former President who cooperated admirably with the Organization in facilitating the peaceful transfer of power in April 1992.

73. Being of the view that the United Nations peacemaking activities in Afghanistan should be maintained, I seek the General Assembly's endorsement of the approach set out in the present report. In the current situation, the will of the United Nations may be firm but its means are limited. All possible means of cooperation with the regional States and OIC will be seriously pursued. I appeal to all other Member States for their continued support for these peace efforts as well as for the critically important humanitarian and rehabilitation activities in Afghanistan which are described in detail in sections III and IV of the present report.

Notes

1/ Mr. Sattar Sirat, Mr. Sultan Mahmoud Ghazi, Mr. Enyatollah Eblagh (who withdrew shortly afterwards for personal reasons) and Mr. Abdul Ahad Karzai.